

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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R 201300Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4140

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0737

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MILI ET

SUBJECT: ACTIVITY WITHIN THE MILITARY IN ERITREA

1. A RELIABLE AMERICAN SOURCE WITH FREQUENT ACCESS TO SECOND DIV. HQ REPORTS THAT 2ND DIV CHIEF OF STAFF AYTENEW (PHONETIC) IS NOW OCCUPYING THE OFFICE OF THE DIV. CO COL. TELEHUN. DURING TELEHUN'S ABSENCES IN THE PAST, AYTENEW DID NOT OCCUPY HIS OFFICE. TELEHUN LEFT FOR ADDIS ON SEPT 17 AND IS KNOWN TO HAVE RETURNED ON SEPT. 19. TELEHUN HAD VISITED ADDIS FOR A WEEK EARLIER IN SEPT AND IS THOUGHT TO HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE EPMG. IT IS CONSIDERED POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, THAT TELEHUN IS BEING TRANSFERRED TO OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES. FOR USDAO ADDIS: WOULD APPRECIATE ANY RECENT INFORMATION CONCERNING COL. TELEHUN AND HIS STANDING IN THE EPMG.

2. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT THERE IS HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE WESTERN
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LOWLANDS NORTH OF TESSENNEY ALONG A TRADITIONAL INSURGENT IN-

FILTRATION ROUTE FROM SUDAN. ETHIOPIAN CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN ARRIVING IN ASMARA SINCE SEPT. 17, AND ARE STILL BEING AIRLIFTED TO THE SECOND DIV. HOSPITAL. ON THE MORNING OF SEPT. 20, BULL-HORNS WERE USED IN RALLYING EPMG TROOPS AT THE SECOND DIV. COMPOUND FOR IMMINENT AIRLIFT INTO COMBAT. IT HAS BECOME STANDARD PRACTICE THAT BEFORE ETHIOPIAN TROOPS ARE SENT INTO COMBAT THEY ARE HARANGUED ABOUT THEIR PATRIOTIC DUTIES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE REVOLUTION. AFTER 45 MINUTES OF CHEERING AND EXHORTATIONS, A CONVOY OF TROOPS LEFT THE CAMP FOR THE AIRPORT.

3. SEVERAL SOURCES REPORT THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INFLUX RECENTLY OF ETHIOPIAN REPLACEMENTS FOR ARMY UNITS STATIONED IN ERITREA. THEIR PRESENCE HAS BEEN NOTICED BECAUSE OF THEIR UNFAMILIARITY WITH PROCEDURES REGARDING THE AMERICANS AT KAGNEW. THERE IS ONE RELIABLE REPORT FROM A SOURCE WHO LIVES IN ASMARA WHO MET A FRIEND HE HAD KNOWN IN ADDIS. THE FRIEND WAS NOT IN THE ARMY AND TOLD THE SOURCE HE HAD BEEN PICKED UP ON THE STREETS OF ADDIS, PUT IN UNIFORM, ARMED AND TRAINED FOR SEVEN DAYS AND THEN DISPATCHED TO ASMARA AS A REPLACEMENT IN A UNIT STATIONED HERE.
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